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## Muse: Under Review (DVD)

From their early beginnings as young teenagers struggling to get noticed to becoming one of the bigger rock bands in the world today, the DVD *Muse: Under Review* is an interesting video that should please fans of the band. The people interviewed for this video provide a wealth of information and are closely associated to the band. They include NME journalists Mark Beaumont and Jude Rogers, former Muse manager Safta Jaffery, record producer John Leckie, recording engineer Ric Peet, art director Laurence Stevens and guitar technician Scott Mckenzie.



It is interesting to learn how the members of Muse, living in the small town of Teignmouth, South Devon, started out as members of the bands Carnage Mayhem and Gothic Plague. The three players united in the band Rocket Baby Doll and won a battle of the bands competition. They soon changed their name to Muse and got the attention of producer Dennis Smith who took the band under his wing offering time in his recording studio. The band recorded two EPs that ironically generated little interest but soon signed with Maverick Recording Company and hooked up with renowned producer John Leckie and released their debut CD *Showbiz* and as they say the rest is history.

The DVD gives a chronological overview of each Muse release and at times goes into great detail about individual tracks, the recording process and what the band was trying to achieve with each album. Concert footage, rare photographs and brief video snippets are included. The DVD provides lots of interesting tidbits that fans of the band will want to hear. For instance, I found it intriguing when Leckie, who produced Radiohead's *The Bends*, called the Muse comparisons to Radiohead "sad" and Jaffery referred to it as "lazy journalism". Another interesting story has Leckie talking about the song "Megalomania" off of *Origin of Symmetry*. While working on the song

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Bellamy thought they should be using a real church organ so they got into their car and drove until they found a church. Apparently, Bellamy went into the church and asked the organist who was playing the organ at the time if he could give it a go. Eventually the band used the very same organ on the recording. As a side note, before the band were allowed to use the organ the Vicar wanted to see the lyrics for the song. As Bellamy had not yet written the lyrics he scribbled some words on a napkin, all positive of course, which met the Vicar's approval.

That being said, I do not agree with everything the DVD presents to us. Scribe Mark Beaumont when talking about *The Origin of Symmetry* calls progressive music of the 70s, of which Muse has been compared with, "*dull and self indulgent*". Of course, many other people feel the same and I always find myself sticking up for that much maligned decade of music. The video also goes into an in depth analysis of the song "United States of Eurasia" found on the band's most recent album *The Resistance*. That song has invited comparisons to Queen and rightly so. However, Beaumont states, "*I don't like thinking of any of those songs as Queen tracks because I think Queen are on the side of bombast that I think they should stay well clear of. It becomes just too theatrical and too flamboyant and just a bit crass I think.*" I am not sure if Beaumont disagrees with the Queen comparisons or thinks the band should reign in the excessive bombast that some of their songs exude. Regardless, Queen are a good starting point when describing some of Muse's more outlandish tracks.

The DVD also includes a few extras including "Capturing Muse", a segment going into detail describing the band's *Hullabaloo* concert at Le Venith, Paris where designer Laurence Stevens gives some good insight.

If you are a fan of the band and like documentary style videos, you should find *Muse: Under Review* very enjoyable as few stones are left unturned. For those curious of the band this video might be a good starting point to learn what all the fuss is about. Released by Sexy Intellectual.

**Chapters:**

1. Intro
2. The Birth of Muse
3. Getting Signed
4. Showbiz
5. Origin of Symmetry
6. Going Live
7. Absolution
8. Black Holes and Revelations
9. The Resistance
10. End Credits

**Extras:**

Capturing the Muse: Designing For the Band  
Contributor's Blogs  
Beyond DVD

**Added:** April 25th 2010

**Reviewer:** Jon Neudorf

**Score:** ★★★★★

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